

## REDOSIER DOGWOOD

*Cornus sericea* L. ssp. *sericea*

plant symbol = COSES

Contributed by: USDA NRCS Plant Materials Program



Robert H. Mohlenbrock  
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 Midwestern Wetland Flora  
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### Alternate Names

*Cornus stolonifera* Michx.

### Uses

The primary use of this species is for streambank protection. It can be planted alone or with other species, such as willows. Other beneficial uses are for fish and wildlife habitat improvement, windbreaks, slope stabilization, borders, and as an ornamental.

### Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

### Description

Redosier dogwood is a large shrub, often 6-9 feet in height. The growth habit is upright rounded, but where stems are in contact with the ground, roots are formed. This behavior creates thickets. This dogwood has bright red stems in the fall, winter and early spring, which turn greenish in the summer. It also has white pith, dark green ovate leaves, white

flowers, and whitish colored fruit. There are 18,500 seeds per pound.

### Adaptation and Distribution

Redosier dogwood is adapted from Ohio to Maine and south to northern Virginia and New Jersey. It performs best in soils that are moist, somewhat poorly drained, moderately acidic to neutral, and in areas that have medium to coarse soils. It is tolerant of some shade but not of droughty conditions.

For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Website.

### Establishment

Streambanks that have steep slopes must first be graded. The slope should be 1:1 or flatter. Any trees considered unstable should be removed. One year old rooted cuttings should be used for planting. Plant in early spring, preferably before May. Do not plant after June 1. Plant the cuttings two feet apart for streambank erosion control, four to six feet apart for wildlife habitat. Establishment with other species, such as willow and other riparian species, is a good practice. On sites with banks that may become dry over the summer, utilize redosier dogwood next to the water, with willows above. Immediately after planting, grasses and legumes may be planted to provide initial stabilization. After 2 or 3 years the dogwoods will become effective. The cultivar 'Ruby' is vulnerable to livestock browsing. In order to ensure survival, fencing must be incorporated into the plan.

Redosier dogwood can also be mixed with willows in soil bioengineering methods. Stems can be used in live fascines, brush layering and brush matting.

Rooted hardwood cuttings are taken in January, allowed to develop callus in refrigerated storage, and planted in mid-May in well drained soil 2 inches apart. The cuttings should be 1/4-1/2 inch in diameter and 9 to 12 inches long. They should be planted with about 2 inches exposed above ground level. Rooting hormone is recommended to enhance success in the nursery.

### Management

Erosion is a continuous process and, because of this, careful management is required at these streambank plantings. The areas should be examined each spring after the major runoff period has ended. Areas where vegetation has been destroyed must be immediately

replaced with new plants. If any mechanical measures are being used to prevent erosion, they must also be maintained to prevent any more damage.

### **Pests and Potential Problems**

'Ruby' redosier dogwood has few problems with disease or insect pests. There has been some problem with cicadas stinging the stems. Lesions and cankers may also occur. However, these are not pathogenic and are thought to just be the tree's reaction to injury.

### **Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)**

'Ruby' (NY) redosier dogwood was released in 1988 from the Big Flats, NY Plant Materials Center. It is available from commercial nurseries.

### **Prepared By & Species Coordinator:**

*USDA NRCS Northeast Plant Materials Program*

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS <<http://plants.usda.gov>> and Plant Materials Program Web sites <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>.

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